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**Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations**

**Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon**

# Comprehensive review of the Strategic Military Cell

## Report of the Secretary-General

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*Summary*

The General Assembly, in paragraph 14 of its resolution 61/250 B, requested the Secretary-General to undertake a comprehensive review of the Strategic Military Cell, including clarification of its role and functioning, its relationship with the Military Division (now Office of Military Affairs) and lessons learned for the military planning of large-scale and complex existing and future peacekeeping operations, as well as proposals for strengthening the capacity of the Office of Military Affairs, and to report to it thereon at the second part of its resumed sixty-first session.

In response to that request, an initial report, containing preliminary observations as a first step of a comprehensive review process, was submitted in April 2007 when the Strategic Military Cell had been operational for just over six months.

In its resolution 61/250 C, the General Assembly recalled its request for a report at the second part of its resumed sixty-second session on the results of the comprehensive review of the Strategic Military Cell, including its recommended life cycle, a rationale for its current staffing level, its relationship and modalities of coordination with the Military Division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat, its impact on the efforts to achieve unity of command and integration in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the cost-effectiveness of its functioning, its interaction with other parts of the Secretariat and the possibility of applying the approach to other missions, in particular the large-scale and complex ones.

The present report, building on the report of April 2007, responds to those requests. Section I provides a summary of the background to the establishment of the Strategic Military Cell in 2006. Section II highlights the concept, structure and tasks of the Cell. Section III describes progress and achievements of the Cell. Section IV sets out options for the future phased reduction of the Cell in the context of the recent comprehensive analysis of the Office of Military Affairs. Section V contains conclusions and observations.

Annex I provides a summary of the outputs of the Strategic Military Cell since its establishment, annex II provides the current organization chart of the Cell and annex III contains proposed organization charts for the Cell as its core capacities are incorporated into the Office of Military Affairs as part of the overall restructuring and strengthening of that Office.

# I. Background

1. Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) marked the crucial step in the cessation of month-long hostilities between Hizbullah and Israel in Lebanon on 14 August 2006. Intensive fighting had resulted in approximately 1,200 casualties, thousands injured, the displacement of almost 1 million civilians and widespread destruction in Lebanon. By the same resolution, the Security Council authorized the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to undertake a series of immediate and substantial new tasks in addition to those mandated under Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978). These included assistance to the Lebanese armed forces to fully deploy in southern Lebanon; coordination of activities with the Government of Lebanon and the Government of Israel; assistance to the Lebanese armed forces in taking steps towards the establishment between the Blue Line and the Litani River of an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons, other than those of the Government of Lebanon and UNIFIL; and, assistance to the Government of Lebanon, at its request, to maintain border security to prevent the unauthorized entry of arms or related materiel, including through the Maritime Task Force.

2. The Security Council, in its resolution 1701 (2006), authorized an increase in the force strength of UNIFIL from 2,000 to a maximum of 15,000 troops in order to supplement and enhance UNIFIL in terms of numbers, mandate and scope of operations to carry out its additional mandated tasks. It also requested the Secretary-General to urgently put in place measures to ensure that UNIFIL was able to carry out the functions envisaged in this resolution. The requirements identified for successful mandate implementation included the deployment of technologically sophisticated assets; the adoption of robust and effective rules of engagement; and a significantly strengthened Force with increased military capacities for rapid deployment; more flexible administrative and financial arrangements; and innovative measures to augment the military planning capacities of the Secretariat.

3. In the report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/670) of 18 August 2007 on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), the need to strengthen the former Military Division (now the Office of Military Affairs) in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to effectively support the scope and complexity of military tasks to be performed by UNIFIL was set out. In response to the specific recommendation of the Secretary-General in his reports (S/2006/670 and S/2006/730), a Strategic Military Cell was created with the full complement of expert military capacities to ensure that the UNIFIL expansion, deployment and additional mandated responsibilities were conducted with and supported by sufficiently dedicated capabilities, employing best practices and lessons learned from contemporary military planning and strategic guidance. The Cell was established by drawing on the institutional expertise of the Office of Military Affairs and augmented by officers from key troop-contributing countries.

4. The General Assembly, in paragraph 14 of its resolution 61/250 B, requested the Secretary-General to undertake a comprehensive review of the Strategic Military Cell, including clarification of its role and functioning, its relationship with the Office of Military Affairs and lessons learned for the military planning and guidance of large-scale and complex existing and future peacekeeping operations, as well as proposals for strengthening the capacity of the Office of Military Affairs, and to report to it thereon at the second part of its resumed sixty-first session. An initial

report was submitted in response to that request in April 2007 when the Strategic Military Cell had been operational for just over six months. That report contained preliminary observations and was the first step in a comprehensive review process.

5. In resolution 61/250 C, the General Assembly recalled its request for a report at the second part of its resumed sixty-second session on the results of the comprehensive review of the Strategic Military Cell, including its recommended life cycle, a rationale for its current staffing level, its relationship and modalities of coordination with the Office of Military Affairs of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat, its impact on the efforts to achieve unity of command and integration in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the cost-effectiveness of its functioning, its interaction with other parts of the Secretariat and the possibility of applying the approach to other missions, in particular the large-scale and complex ones.

6. The present report provides a comprehensive review of the Cell and proposes options for the future phased reduction of the Strategic Military Cell in the context of the overall restructuring and strengthening of the Office of Military Affairs.

## II. Concept and structure of the Strategic Military Cell

### A. Concept: rationale and role

7. Contemporary military operations benefit from having a strategic military headquarters, including strategic guidance and oversight, as well as military expertise to support specialized military capabilities. The Strategic Military Cell constitutes a strengthened, multifunctional strategic-level military structure with military expertise to support specialized military capabilities, which is responsible for the provision of military advice to the senior management of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the UNIFIL Force Commander, and for ensuring that the analysis, assessment, planning, command and control, and support and evaluation needs of the Mission and the Secretariat are comprehensively addressed.

8. The significance of the role of the Strategic Military Cell is derived from the complexity, risks and strategic implications of conducting peacekeeping operations in highly sensitive and complex political and operational environments. The mandated tasks of UNIFIL require not only the routine monitoring and support of the Force, but also contingency planning and operational preparedness to enable it to adapt and respond to new and unexpected situations.

### B. Structure

9. The Strategic Military Cell consists of the Office of the Director and six branches as set out in the report of April 2007. The Director of the Strategic Military Cell reports to the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, functions in close coordination with the Military Adviser in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and coordinates with the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support. The Strategic Military Cell is staffed primarily by military officers from troop-contributing countries to UNIFIL, which has created a strengthened sense of ownership and accountability for the deployed troops. The staffing of the Strategic

Military Cell also draws on the resources of the Office of Military Affairs, in particular, but not limited to, the force generation functions of the Office of Military Affairs. The military joint branch structure divides military staff activities into clearly defined functional areas and mirrors the military functional structure established in UNIFIL and other peacekeeping operations at the Force headquarters and Sector levels.

10. The Strategic Military Cell carries out its activities in the framework of established integrated planning mechanisms within the Secretariat, as well as command and coordination processes within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations is responsible for the direction of the Strategic Military Cell, and is supported by the Office of Operations of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the strategic and executive direction of peacekeeping operations. As part of these functions, the Office of Operations coordinates and integrates relevant information and contributions from within the Department, including the Strategic Military Cell and the Department of Field Support, to enable the implementation of Security Council mandates within the overall political and strategic direction provided by the Under-Secretary-General. As with all peacekeeping operations, the Office of Operations is responsible for fulfilling the reporting requirements of the Secretariat to the Security Council for UNIFIL, to which the Strategic Military Cell contributes.

11. As the focal point for the provision of strategic and operational level military advice related to UNIFIL, the Strategic Military Cell coordinates closely with the Office of Military Affairs to ensure that military plans and guidance are consistent with the Organization's approach, policy application and procedures for current operations and planning across peacekeeping operations. In addition, the Strategic Military Cell works with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations Situation Centre in monitoring the situation in Lebanon, and the operations monitoring component of the Strategic Military Cell is co-located in the Situation Centre for that purpose. Coordination is also maintained between the Strategic Military Cell and the Department of Field Support on issues related to logistics, finance and personnel support.

12. Within the overall integrated approach of delivery to the field of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, coordination is facilitated through a number of specific mechanisms. The Strategic Military Cell participates in weekly UNIFIL working group meetings chaired by the Office of Operations, which bring together Political Affairs Officers and representatives from the Office of Military Affairs and the Department of Field Support, including its logistics, financial and personnel specialists, to ensure a coordinated and integrated approach. The working group meets to evaluate progress and developments within the mission area and identifies cross-cutting issues to be addressed at the interdepartmental level. Representatives from the various offices within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support also participate in the periodic videoconference meetings held between the Strategic Military Cell and UNIFIL.

13. The cost-effectiveness of the Strategic Military Cell, whose budget has been less than 1 per cent of the UNIFIL budget, is measured by the impact of its activities, which are set out below.

# III. Functions and activities of the Strategic Military Cell

14. The Strategic Military Cell has succeeded in fulfilling its envisaged role by providing additional support to ensure that the UNIFIL expansion, deployment and additional mandated responsibilities have been supported by sufficiently dedicated strategic level capabilities.

## A. Monitoring and assessment

15. The Strategic Military Cell contributes to the monitoring and assessment of the operational environment in Lebanon and UNIFIL-related military oversight and planning activities within the Secretariat. This includes the development of threat assessments and daily reporting on UNIFIL military activities. Strategic military guidance is provided to UNIFIL by the Strategic Military Cell, which also develops strategic-level contingency planning in close consultation with the field. New military capabilities for UNIFIL on the ground have been generated, such as the Community Outreach Unit, and the Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance Unit, as well as electronic countermeasures to mitigate the risks posed by improvised explosive devices.

16. The Strategic Military Cell regularly reviews and assesses the effectiveness of the military component of UNIFIL and proposes adjustments, as appropriate. This includes reviewing the implementation of the military strategic concept of operation, rules of engagement and Force and troop requirements, as well as conducting ship/troop-to-task analyses, identifying new capabilities and providing specialist military advice to memorandums of understanding and letter-of-assist negotiations. The Strategic Military Cell provides an ongoing assessment of the operational effectiveness of the Force, regularly reviews the threat and risk assessment and develops likely scenarios to support contingency planning.

17. The Strategic Military Cell has conducted comprehensive research in response to developments in the field to inform the UNIFIL working group and senior management of implications for and possible impact on the mission. In addition, the Cell has developed a regional assessment as it affects the situation in Lebanon, in order to identify likely future scenarios. This assessment has been shared within the Secretariat.

18. The Strategic Military Cell has also contributed to the development of UNIFIL guidelines to establish the Joint Mission Analysis Centre and Joint Operations Centre in the field. The concept for both Centres was developed following consultation with the field and the UNIFIL working group. The Cell is continuously seeking improvements in the collation and analysis of information from the field and other sources in order to enhance decision-making in headquarters and to support commanders in the field.

## B. Crisis response

19. The Strategic Military Cell also participates in departmental crisis response measures in accordance with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations crisis response policy. This participation was critical following the bomb attack on UNIFIL on 24 June 2007 that killed six peacekeepers serving with the Spanish

contingent, particularly with regard to the definition and provision of mitigating measures. The Cell demonstrated its ability to effectively support the response of Headquarters to a crisis in the field by providing specialist technical advice and assessments and assisting UNIFIL in reviewing its operational methods and contingency plans. In addition, the Strategic Military Cell, working in close coordination with UNIFIL, the Department of Field Support and the Department of Safety and Security, established a Theatre Frequency Management Cell in the field to coordinate the effective employment of electronic and radio transmissions in the mission area. This ensures that at all times, and particularly during a crisis, all electronic and radio technologies work efficiently and are unaffected by one another.

## C. Relationship with troop-contributing countries

20. The Cell maintains close and regular dialogue with troop-contributing countries to keep them apprised of the status of mandate implementation. The Strategic Military Cell maintains liaison arrangements with the troop contributors through the Military Advisers of the Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York. This liaison permits a regular exchange of information and discussion on military and technical matters. The Strategic Military Cell has held troop-contributing countries meetings, informal meetings with maritime contributing countries, and bilateral meetings to discuss the preparation and deployment of national contributions. The Cell also supports the Office of Operations in interactions regarding operational matters with Member States that are not troop contributors.

21. The Strategic Military Cell, in consultation with the Department of Field Support, UNIFIL and Member States, reviewed the UNIFIL contingent-owned equipment mission factors and proposed changes to the hostile action and forced abandonment mission factor to reflect prevailing operational conditions more accurately.

## D. Planning

22. The specific military technical specialties provided in the Strategic Military Cell structure directly mirror those functions in the UNIFIL Force headquarters and so permits direct technical links for military matters, as well as specialist interlocutors at Headquarters for civilian counterparts in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Field Support and the Department of Safety and Security. This capacity allows for a collaborative planning process to be implemented at the strategic, operational and tactical or field levels and ensures unity of effort. This has accelerated the planning process and allowed the development and maintenance of a common operational view between Headquarters and the field, which has strengthened unity of command and coherence in decision-making.

23. Initially, the Cell focused on the urgent planning requirements related to the UNIFIL enhancement, as well as the deployment of troops and specialized capabilities into the mission area. The Cell also reviewed the force requirements and the operational effectiveness of the military component and recommended

adjustments. In addition, and in coordination with UNIFIL, the Cell reviewed the UNIFIL rules of engagement. The Strategic Military Cell has supported the operational planning of the military component, as requested by the Force Commander. It has also established specific measures to monitor the status of implementation of the tasks in the field.

24. The planning element of the Strategic Military Cell, supported by its intelligence and analysis element, provides the basis for multiple multifunctional planning teams drawing on other specialists from within the Cell, in such fields as personnel administration, military logistics, and maritime, land and information operations. These highly capable military planning teams can also be expanded to include representatives from the Office of Operations, the Force Generation Service of the Office of Military Affairs and the Department of Field Support, when necessary. These planning teams conduct research and analysis to develop strategic guidance to the field and contingency plans.

25. The Strategic Military Cell has also strengthened scenario planning to support operational contingencies. The Cell has developed several likely scenarios with political, social and economic aspects and consequences identified that would affect UNIFIL mandate implementation. These projections are based on possible evolutions of the current situation in Lebanon and are intended to inform contingency planning. These scenarios will be further refined as the situation evolves in the field.

## E. Maritime Task Force

26. Significant effort was invested by the Strategic Military Cell to establish the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force, involving considerable land and maritime planning activity and several technical meetings with troop-contributing countries.

27. The Strategic Military Cell's maritime, land and logistics elements provide technical interlocutors and counterparts for the Force, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries. Specifically, the Cell has supported the Force Generation Service of the Office of Military Affairs and the Department of Field Support in technical negotiations with Member States regarding memorandums of understanding and letters-of-assist. For example, the Strategic Military Cell assisted the Department of Field Support with the preparation of the letter-of-assist for the UNIFIL maritime units by providing specialist technical advice, recommendations, statistics and estimates on proposed maritime operations.

28. The Cell's advice on maritime activities has included assessments and recommendations on current and likely developments that could affect UNIFIL maritime and land operations, which has strengthened decision-making and contingency planning. The Cell has been able to address the range of technical maritime operating procedures and negotiations necessary to successfully employ a United Nations maritime capability.

29. The Strategic Military Cell has been able to effectively address the absence of maritime planning and deployment expertise in the Secretariat to support the enhancement of UNIFIL and also enabled naval capabilities, personnel, units and equipment to be appropriately considered in deliberations and procedures relating to contingent-owned equipment. The Strategic Military Cell has also assisted the Force

Generation Service of the Office of Military Affairs to review the maritime component in the tables of organization and equipment. This specialist capacity has enabled the Secretariat to strengthen its ability to plan and conduct maritime operations in the future. The Strategic Military Cell has also assisted the Secretariat in identifying lessons related to establishing a Maritime Task Force. Annex I provides a summary of the outputs of the Strategic Military Cell since its establishment.

## IV. Options for the future of the Strategic Military Cell

30. The Strategic Military Cell was created to more effectively enable the Secretariat to support UNIFIL in carrying out its Security Council-mandated tasks. The structure and specialist military functions of the Strategic Military Cell (see annex II) have reflected and effectively addressed the complexity of the peacekeeping challenges in Lebanon. While the enhancement of UNIFIL is now complete, the implementation of the mandated tasks in such a politically and operationally complex environment demands that the multifunctional oversight and management specialties provided by the Cell are retained at an appropriate level of capacity.

31. The Strategic Military Cell has not only proved to be an extremely useful resource in UNIFIL, but has also demonstrated the value of committing sufficient resources for strategic direction and planning oversight for all peacekeeping operations. Given that UNIFIL still requires support, but not at the capacity level of the current Strategic Military Cell structure, it is recommended that the Strategic Military Cell be downsized and its core capacities be incorporated in a phased manner into the Office of Military Affairs as part of the overall restructuring and strengthening of that Office. This would ensure that UNIFIL would continue to receive the support it requires and that the specialist capacities of the Strategic Military Cell could also be used to provide oversight and management benefits to all peacekeeping operations.

32. A phased downsizing of the Strategic Military Cell is proposed with an initial reduction of 25 per cent during the period from July to December 2008, followed by a further reduction of another 25 per cent of the current strength from January to June 2009. The phased reduction of the Strategic Military Cell would be dependent on the strengthening of the Office of Military Affairs, and the Cell would initially retain a direct reporting line to the Under-Secretary-General during crises, and during routine operations, through the Military Adviser. The precise timing of the phases would be determined by the situation on the ground, consultations with troop-contributing countries, and the progress of the proposed strengthening and restructuring of the Office of Military Affairs, which includes increased strategic direction and oversight, the creation of specialist and crisis response capacities, and mission start-up and expansion capability.

33. The structures of the Strategic Military Cell during the first and second phases are contained in annex III. The restructuring would reconfigure the branch structure, resulting in three main branches: Intelligence, Plans and Support. The existing Land Operations Branch, Maritime Branch and Planning Branch would merge into a Plans Branch, while the Personnel Branch would join the Logistics Branch in a Support Branch. Once the Strategic Military Cell is fully integrated into the strengthened

Office for Military Affairs, the head of the Strategic Military Cell will report to the Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations, through the Military Adviser.

## V. Observations and conclusions

34. As a temporary means of augmenting overstretched capacities during the start-up phase for the expansion of UNIFIL, the Strategic Military Cell has proved to be an extremely useful resource, increasing the military strategic planning and oversight capacity within the Secretariat for UNIFIL. A multifunctional military strategic capability is essential when an operation is conducted in a complex and politically sensitive environment, requiring the deployment of sophisticated assets, military capability and equipment.

35. In particular, the monitoring and assessment, crisis response, troop-contributing countries liaison, and planning and maritime task force expertise activities of the Strategic Military Cell have borne out the value of such a resource for a peacekeeping operation.

36. In regard to monitoring and assessment activities, the Strategic Military Cell has developed threat assessments; provided daily reporting and regular strategic military guidance; created new military capabilities; reviewed and assessed the effectiveness of the military component of the Force; provided ongoing assessments of the operational effectiveness of the Force; carried out research on developments in the field; and contributed to the development of guidelines to establish the Joint Mission Analysis Centre and Joint Operations Centre in UNIFIL.

37. The Strategic Military Cell has also participated in departmental crisis response measures, including, in conjunction with the mission and other Departments, establishing a Theatre Frequency Management Cell. In addition, the maintenance of close and regular dialogue with troop-contributing countries has enabled Member States to provide information and assistance swiftly and has also kept Member States fully abreast of political and operational developments.

38. Additional planning capacity for UNIFIL has been provided by the Strategic Military Cell, including reviewing force requirements and operational effectiveness, reviewing the UNIFIL rules of engagement, supporting the operational planning of the military component, establishing measures to monitor the implementation of tasks in the field, creating multifunctional planning teams, and strengthening scenario planning. With regard to the Maritime Task Force, the Strategic Military Cell has provided technical interlocutors, supported force generation by the Office of Military Affairs and the Department of Field Support, and provided advice on maritime activities, including technical maritime operating procedures.

39. The establishment of the Strategic Military Cell has, for the first time, provided resources to ensure a dedicated and coherent strategic military planning and oversight capacity to a mission operating in a highly challenging and evolving political and operational environment. The contribution of the Strategic Military Cell has been essential in ensuring the delivery of Headquarters support to UNIFIL, including the provision of integrated support. Given that the benefits that the Strategic Military Cell has demonstrated are applicable to all peacekeeping operations, it is important to capitalize upon this expertise and expand these benefits

**across all peacekeeping operations while at the same time ensuring that adequate support is maintained for UNIFIL. In particular, it is anticipated that complex missions will benefit from the additional military information analysis capability and the aviation and maritime experts who will be able to establish requirements, plan appropriately to meet these requirements, monitor implementation and draft rules of engagement. These proposed adjustments would, to a large extent, be linked to the evolution of capacities within the Office of Military Affairs, the details of which are further elaborated in the report of the Secretary-General on the restructuring of the Office.**

## VI. Action to be taken by the General Assembly

**40. The General Assembly is requested to take note of the present report.**

# Annex I

## Summary of outputs since the establishment of the Strategic Military Cell

### Monitoring and assessment

| | |
|---|---|
| Daily UNIFIL monitoring and assessment briefings | 353 |
| Weekly assessment reports to the Under-Secretary-General | 60 |
| Videoconference with Force headquarters | 33 |
| Assessment/evaluation on specific topics | 10 |
| Reconnaissance in the field | 9 |
| Surge activations of the Cell | 3 |
| Outcome-based assessment process | continuous |
| Assessment of internal work | continuous |

### Planning

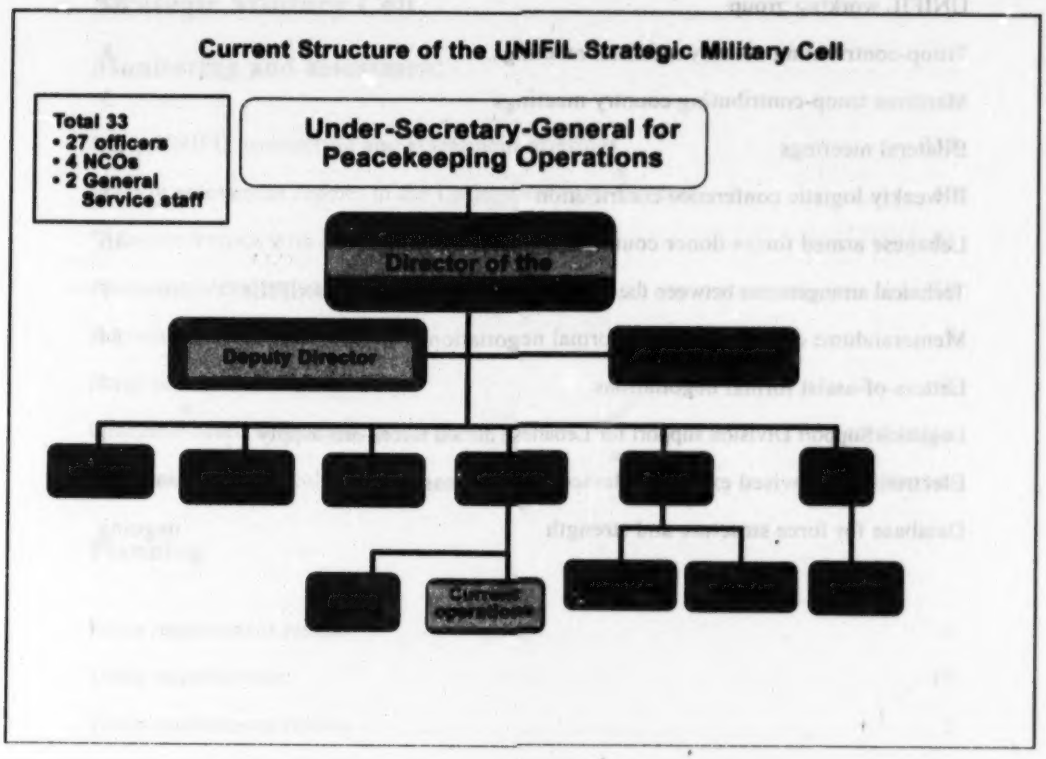
| | |
|---|---|
| Force requirement review | 1 |
| Troop requirements | 19 |
| Troop requirement review | 2 |
| Troop requirements under draft | 2 |
| Force headquarters structure review | 3 |
| Sector headquarters structure review | 2 |
| Rules of engagement revision | 1 |
| Contingency plans | 3 |
| Strategic guidance | 2 |
| Strategic operational plans | 1 |
| Joint Mission Analysis Cell duties and organization | 1 |
| Time for generating and deploying UNIFIL forces | 4 months |
| Enhanced rapidly deployable capacities | continuous |

## Support

| | |
|---|---|
| UNIFIL working group | 82 |
| Troop-contributing country informal meetings | 8 |
| Maritime troop-contributing country meetings | 5 |
| Bilateral meetings | 30 |
| Biweekly logistic conference contribution | 11 |
| Lebanese armed forces donor countries bilateral meetings | 10 |
| Technical arrangements between the Government of Lebanon and UNIFIL | 1 |
| Memorandums of understanding, formal negotiations | 54 |
| Letters-of-assist formal negotiations | 17 |
| Logistics Support Division support for Lebanese armed forces fuel supply | 1 |
| Electronic improvised explosive device countermeasures | ongoing |
| Database for force structure and strength | ongoing |

## Annex II

### Organization chart of the Strategic Military Cell



# Annex III

## Envisaged structure of the Strategic Military Cell